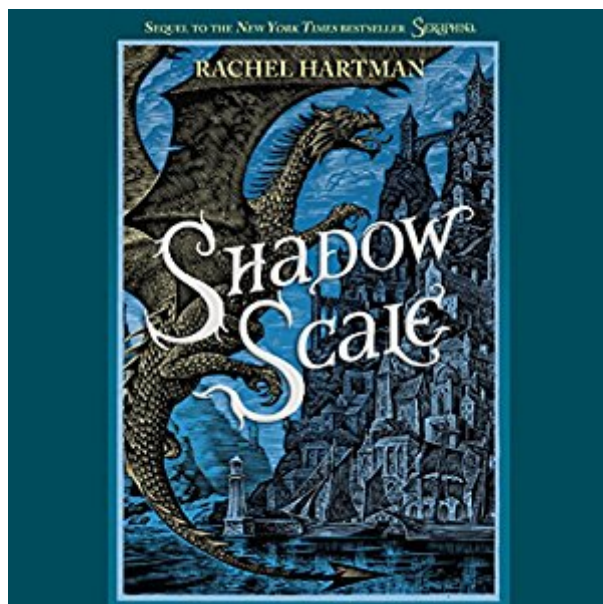


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Shadow Scale: A Companion To Seraphina



Synopsis

Seraphina took the literary world by storm with eight starred reviews and numerous "Best of" lists. At last, her eagerly awaited sequel has arrived - and with it comes an epic battle between humans and dragons. The kingdom of Goredd: a world where humans and dragons share life with an uneasy balance, and those few who are both human and dragon must hide the truth. Seraphina is one of these, part girl, part dragon, who is reluctantly drawn into the politics of her world. When war breaks out between the dragons and humans, she must travel the lands to find those like herself - for she has an inexplicable connection to all of them, and together they will be able to fight the dragons in powerful, magical ways. As Seraphina gathers this motley crew, she is pursued by humans who want to stop her. But the most terrifying is another half dragon, who can creep into people's minds and take them over. Until now, Seraphina has kept her mind safe from intruders, but that also means she's held back her own gift. It is time to make a choice: Cling to the safety of her old life, or embrace a powerful new destiny?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rachel Hartman's *Seraphina* was a subtle, exquisitely quiet novel, nuanced and filled with sharply realized characters. I absolutely fell in love with it, placing it on my list of top reads that year, so it kills me to report that the eagerly-awaited sequel, *Shadow Scale*, not only failed to meet my (admittedly high) expectations, but really disappointed across the board. *Shadow Scale* picks up shortly after the events of *Seraphina*, with dragons involved in an all-out civil war and their ousted leader Comonot allied with the human land of Goredd. While Princess Glisselda and Prince Kiggs

prepare for war, Seraphina travels to find other ityasaari (half-dragons) such as herself, prompted by a discovery by Orma (her full dragon uncle) that the half-dragons might be able to provide a magical defense against dragon attacks. Her antagonist in this endeavor is Jannoula, the ityasaari who nearly possessed her mind in the prior novel and who uses that talent to take over other nearly all the half-dragons in this one. I had several issues with *Shadow Scale*. One is the pacing felt way off. The novel comes in at about 600 pages, which felt over-long by several hundred pages. The story started off slowly, then plodded along from place to place, much as Seraphina herself did, with little variation — no sense of urgency even when the storyline seemed to call for it, no slowing down for quieter moments. That isn't to say there were no quiet moments, but it all felt apace; those moments didn't stand out at all. The whole thing just dragged for me, and it never really felt like the author was fully in control or cognizant of the pacing.

Book two started with a prologue written by a future scholar who was looking back on past events, recalling the very events that made up book two. Right away I got this gut feeling that a certain plotline was going to turn out in a way I wasn't particularly fond of. So I started reading this book with a hesitant mindset. This book was all about preparing for war and assembling the pieces to the puzzle of the human-dragon hybrids that we started to uncover back in book one. *Shadow Scale* takes place a few months after book one ends, but you do not really feel like much time has passed between the two books. I hated the romance in this book. While I never got the feeling the romance was going to be the main plot after reading book one, I wanted something more -anything- to happen in this one. Neither Prince Kiggs nor Seraphina wanted to overstep that line that would end our suffering from watching their longing. He was promised to marry his cousin, whom both he and Seraphina were fond of, and neither felt it was the right time to hurt her by sharing their newfound feelings with each other. So we waited. We sent covert glances to each other. We ignored the other. We waited. We did our duty. It was like we have this fiery explosion at the end of book one, and then reality sat back in and it was over. I wanted them to get together. I wanted them to make it work. But as the story continued, we lost that focus and it became all about the half-dragons and the saints of old. Which isn't to say it took a bad turn, because I loved meeting the rest from her garden. Even if there were parts in her journey that felt redundant because of the sheer number of characters.

"The world is seldom so simple that it hinges on us alone." The kingdom of Goredd has had an uneasy peace with the dragons found in the neighboring Tanamoot for the past forty years--a time in which the arts have flourished while Goredd's dragon-fighting tools have languished. When

mounting tensions between humans and dragons threatens to draw Goredd into the middle of another treacherous war, Seraphina reluctantly finds herself as the center of the conflict. Goredd has few tools left to fight dragons save for rumors of a magical weapon used during the Age of Saints. A weapon Seraphina might be able to recreate with help from other half-dragons like herself. After spending years hiding her true self, Seraphina sets out across kingdoms to seek out the other half-dragons--beings she's only ever previously encountered in her own mind--before war breaks out. As Seraphina gathers her motley band of allies, she soon realizes that war is not the only threat to the half-dragons, her kingdom, or even herself. With so many trying to stop her, Seraphina will have to embrace her true identity, and the ramifications it will have for herself and the other half-dragons, if she has any hope of stopping this senseless war in *Shadow Scale* (2015) by Rachel Hartman. *Shadow Scale* is the highly anticipated sequel to Hartman's debut novel *Seraphina*. While this book does an excellent job of explaining key events from book one, it's still crucial to read these in order. Every aspect of *Shadow Scale* is handled brilliantly and often surpasses the achievements and charms of *Seraphina*, which is no small feat. This book is intricate, clever and often unexpected as many given facts from *Seraphina* are challenged or turned upside down.

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